

Miscellaneous.

From the London old Monthly for April.

JESSE WEEVIL.

BY HAL WILLIS, STUDENT AT LAW. I. THE MOUSE-TRAP.

A cotemporary chum of Weevil's described him as a very little man, with a very little head, and very little in it.

At an early age he indicated a disposition for practical jokes, industriously planning, without the requisite ingenuity and adroitness to carry the projects into execution. Jesse had barely attained his eighth year when he accidentally witnessed the extrication of a half guillotined mouse, whose predatory exploits in the larder were most ignominiously closed by a trap baited with toasted cheese on the over night.

She turned angrily upon him, and chided him for his cruel disposition; and snatching away his "play-thing," made him toast a piece of double Gloucester for a fresh bait. Jesse went sulky to his task, and his affectionate mother, in order to light a smile upon his innocent countenance, and implant a taste for mechanism in his mind, explained the construction of the trap as she set it.

In the afternoon (it was a half-holiday) he was allowed to invite Tommy Wilkins to tea. "Now for a bit of fun," said Jesse to himself. "Tommy, did you ever see a trap?"

"What's a trap?" inquired his friend. "What! don't you know?" said Jesse, delighted at his ignorance; and mounting in a chair, he drew the mouse-trap carefully from the shelf. "Do you see that cheese?"

"Is that cheese?" "Touch it and try."

"What for?" "For fun, to be sure," replied Jesse, anxiously. "Look here: just put your finger at it so—don't you see how I do it?"

"No," said Tommy, blundering forward, and running against Master Jesse's finger was forced into the trap, and he roared aloud for help.

Such an early impression would have endured, and been a wholesome warning to many during the rest of their lives; but Jesse Weevil was a strange compound, and the incident had no more effect on his mind than a pebble cast into a pond, which is now wrinkled and ruffled. (Like an old dowager,) and anon becomes smooth and glassy again in a moment.

II: THE BASKET OF GAME.

The old proverb of "birds of a feather," &c. was verified in Weevil's selection of his cronies. They were all devotedly attached to the same elegant pursuits, and generally met weekly at a certain house of entertainment, where they smoked cigars and each other simultaneously, and discussed bowls of toddy and Welch rabbits. The ingenious Weevil was unanimously elected their President; and many a way-farer was startled by the boisterous chorus of "We won't go home till morning—they durst not shut us out!"—as he passed the windows of the room where the youths were performing their orgies.

It happened one day that a basket of game was left at this rendezvous, addressed to "Jesse Weevil, Esq.—Carriage paid." It soon attracted the notice of one of his boon companions, who dexterously reversed the card, and inscribed thereon the name of "Walter Trott," another member of the intelligent clique. Weevil arrived soon afterward.

"What sport, my buck?" demanded he. "No sport," replied his chum, "but here's some game."

"Say no more," exclaimed the delighted Jesse, slapping his forehead. "I've an idea, now mind—mum's the word! Fetch up Griggs."

Griggs was summoned, and he entered with a grin.

"I say, Griggs," cried Weevil, cutting the string and producing the game, "we want you to dress this hare and these birds for supper, and serve it up in your best style."

"Leave it to me, sir," was the reply, as the host walked off with the spoils, just as the whole crew began to drop in. The conversation soon became general, noisy, and interesting. At last the cloth was laid.

"Hallo! what's in the wind now?" inquired Master Walter Trott, surprised at the unusual display; "here's a spread!"

"Only a snack," said Weevil; "and we must beg you to take the chair on the occasion."

"I?"

"Yes, you," answered Weevil. "Well, I'm sure—the honor—but I'm always ready to do any thing that will conduce to the harmony of the company," replied the by no means reluctant Trott.

The supper was served forthwith; and upon the removal of the cloth, Weevil

arose, and, in an elaborate mock speech, returned thanks for the very handsome entertainment the chairman had provided.

"What?—eh!—how do you mean?" stammered the astonished Trott.

By way of elucidation, the basket was handed to him, amid peals of laughter.

The unconscious entertainer looked blank, and pretended to read the card; but in fumbling it with his fingers, he turned it over and discovered the original address.

"Gentlemen," said he, rising, "nothing, I assure you, would be more gratifying to feelings than to entertain my friends—(hear! hear!)—but I cannot—I will not allow—(shouts of laughter)—that praise which is due to another to be bestowed upon myself. Instead of returning you my thanks, permit me to propose the health of Jesse Weevil; for—(I speak by the card.)—it appears to me this basket is addressed to him, and to him, therefore, let our thanks be paid!"

Weevil seized the basket: the trick was too obvious to be misunderstood; and the factious Jesse, unable to support the jeers and laughter of his friends, flung down the basket, and rushed from the convulsed assembly.

III. THE KID GLOVE.

Mr. Walter Trott, who was rather an exquisite in his way, was standing before blazing fire, surrounded by a knot of the jocose fraternity, and was relating a prime adventure of which he was the hero, when Jimmy Dawson, winking at Weevil, drew him aside.

"Well!" said Weevil. "We shall have a novel dish to-night," said Jimmy.

"How do you mean?" "Why, don't you see that Trott is roasting his kid for our entertainment?"

"Admirable!" cried Weevil; and whispering his crony for a moment, Jimmy slipped out, and returned with a pair of scissors.

"Keep him in conversation," said Jesse, "and see how I'll carve his kid."

Weevil accordingly beat about the bush a little time, and then approached his victim, from whose delicate hands dangled the fingers of a new pair of lemon-colored gloves. Adroitly snipping off the fingers, Jesse deposited them in his pocket, and then wheeled round to the front, and joined in the laugh of the delighted audience.

"And then putting out my hand in this fashion," continued Trott, extending his right fist, and at the same time bringing forward the curtailed gauntlets in his left, he stopped short in his exciting narrative, and eyed the clipped coverings of his hands with a look that produced a momentary

"Now, 'pon my life," cried he, "this is really too bad!" "Nay, don't whimper," said Weevil, scarcely able to utter a word for laughter. "Don't whimper, Trott; I'm sure the amusement is worth a dozen pair of the best that ever crossed the Channel."

"I wouldn't care a pin about the matter," said Trott—"but the fact is—"

"They are the gift of some Dulcinea, I suppose!" interrupted Weevil.

"But the fact is, the mirth is not at my expense," resumed Trott; "or in a freak I extracted these same gloves—"

"Call 'em mitts," said Weevil, with tears in his eyes. "From the pocket of our excellent friend Weevil!" continued Trott, handing him the mitts. The fun which ensued may be easily imagined.

IV. THE SIGN PAINTER.

The deeds which were done by Weevil and his friends on dark nights were as innumerable as they were annoying to every inhabitant in the vicinity. If a board were placed in the front garden of any house, to intimate that lodgings were to let, it was sure to be transferred to some crusty neighbor's, who was well known to have too much pride or too large a family to offer such accommodation for single men? Impertinent applications and angry altercations were the consequence. Bells were rung alarmingly—the knockers twisted from the doors—and the nightcaps of the drowsy inhabitants who ventured to peep from an open window were the chosen marks for the well-directed pea-shooters of this irregular troop.

Having read an amusing account of a certain sign-painting exploit, Weevil proposed "to get up" a similar entertainment; and a large pot of whitewash and a brush were accordingly provided for the operation.

The appointed hour arrived, and the youths sallied forth, Weevil carrying the pot and brush, and six others bearing a light ladder, borrowed from the stable yard of the inn where they held their *Symposia*.

Their first attempt was made upon the "Black Boy," which having accomplished, Weevil declared he deserved the thanks of the corps for having performed the miracle of washing the Blackamoor white.

The "Rose" next grew pale under his able hand—and having complete this transformation to his taste, he ordered the *escalcade* to proceed to the "Carved Red Lion." This was to be the crowning feat.

Having mounted to the ledge whereon the fierce-looking quadruped was fixed, he began to rub in the color, and had already completed the half of his task, giving the animal the appearance of a shaved poodle, when he was startled by a fearful roar, not from the lion, but from his affrighted companions, who close upon their heels beheld a detachment of police.

Pot and brush fell from the grasp of Weevil; and our hero, who thought with the redoubtable Falstaff that "discretion was

the better part of valor," made for the ladder: but alas! his dear friends, in their confusion, had kicked it down.

His situation was by no means enviable—escape was vain detection certain, and—but he shall beg leave to quote from the columns of a respectable contemporary, as we feel by no means competent to give so lucid an account of the catastrophe.

"POLICE OFFICE.—A gentleman about three-and-twenty years of age, with fair hair, and of slight and rather genteel figure, was this morning brought before Mr. Mittimus, the magistrate. He was dressed in a fashionably cut suit of black, but which was so ridiculously daubed with white, that a zoologist would unhesitatingly declared him to be a species of that party-colored bird, cycloped a magpie!"

"What is the charge?" demanded Mr. Mittimus.

"Please your worship," said the policeman, "I discovered this gentleman, about one o'clock this morning, in a very suspicious situation."

"Indeed," said Mr. Mittimus, "he looks very like an insolvent who has just undergone the process of whitewashing. Pray describe the situation in which you found him."

"He was crouched on the ledge beside the sign of the Red Lion, in — street."

"Very suspicious indeed," said Mr. Mittimus. "What is your name?"

"Henry Jones," said the prisoner.

"What are you?"

"A gentleman at large," was the reply. "Not at present remarked the facetious magistrate. And pray may I ask you what you did on the ledge of the sign of the Red Lion in — street?"

"Only half what I intended," replied Mr. Henry Jones; "for I had taken a fancy to paint the Red Lion white, and had only half done the job when I was interrupted by the police."

"Candid at any rate; but what induced you to make the noble animal change color?"

"The fact is, sir," replied Mr. Henry Jones, "it's a ridiculous piece of business altogether. I am heartily ashamed of the freak; but the truth is, I was elevated at the time."

"Yes, we have proof of that," laconically interpolated Mr. Mittimus.

"Exactly, sir," replied Mr. Henry Jones. "Well, it is a foolish affair, I must confess," said Mr. Mittimus; "and I am really sorry to see a young gentleman of your appearance in such a predicament. Retire and endeavor to get your property out of the way."

"Their demands are already satisfied," replied Mr. Henry Jones, "and they have promised not to prefer any complaint against me."

"Was there any resistance on the capture?" demanded Mr. Mittimus.

"None, your worship," replied the policeman; "he walked away like a lamb."

"A sheep" was on the tongue of the magistrate; but he suppressed it with a smile, and ordering Mr. Henry Jones to pay a fine of five shillings for his acknowledged elevation, he was discharged."

VI. THE MUD-LARK.

A dull, damp, foggy night in November, offered a favorable opportunity for the exercise of Weevil's peculiar talents. A dark lane leading to the town, was the chosen spot of his exploit. The muddy state of the road was a source of particular gratulation to our hero, and he sallied forth, inwardly rejoicing at the anticipation of his charitable intentions. Carefully affixing a cord to the stump of an old tree, he drew it scientifically across the muddy road, and fastened it to a fence on the opposite side of the thoroughfare, making it form a straight line about a foot and a half from the ground. Concealing himself, with accurate, behind the projecting angel of a shed, Weevil anxiously awaited the issue of his stratagem.

Presently the voice of a passenger singing aloud, "A queer little man—very—how came you so?" struck like sweet music on the tightened drum of his attentive ear. Louder any louder grew the voice as the singer approached, but still the thickness of the fog prevented Jesse from beholding the form or figure of his unconscious victim. He was indeed to him *vox et preterea nihil*. Weevil scarcely breathed, although his heart panted almost audibly.

Nearer and nearer the stranger approached; and, at last, a stumble, a splash, and a sudden exclamation, indicated to the critical ear of Weevil, that the "singing bird" had fallen in his trap.

Several people, attracted by the cries of the floundering youth, ran to the spot, and Weevil, having cut the treacherous line, joined the group.

"Oh, here's a precious go!" exclaimed a blubbering boy of about sixteen, with a clothes-basket in his hand, the contents whereof were fearfully scattered in the road.

"Never mind, my lad," said Weevil, in a half pitying, half consolatory tone. "It's easy never minding o' me," replied the boy, jamming the rumpled linen pell-mell in his basket, "but shan't I get a lathering? that's all."

Every one of the bystanders charitably endeavored to comfort the unfortunate boy.

"Have you injured yourself?" demanded the kind-hearted Weevil.

"Injured myself!" repeated the boy. "No by gosh! There ain't no chance of breaking bones in tumbling into such a pudding as this here. But I ain't a nice

mess, am I?" continued he, angrily, holding up his muddy arms, and showing himself to the mob.

"The more dirt, the less hurt, however," remarked Weevil; and at the same time the boy inadvertently shook off the liquid mud, with which the too curious Jesse was spattered from top to toe. The crowd, of course, laughed heartily; and Weevil, aware that any remonstrance on his part, would have been jeered at, pocketed the affront, and walked quietly home.

His suit of black was quickly changed; and seating himself by a blazing fire, he indulged in reading till nine o'clock, when ringing the bell, he ordered his housekeeper to bring up his things, as he was going to *adornize*, preparatory to starting for annual ball, given at the principal inn in the town, at which all the beauty and fashion of the neighborhood were to display their attractions.

Directly, sir," replied the obsequious domestic, and retired. Meanwhile, Weevil began practising his new steps, and trying over some concerted phrases intended for the ear of the delectable Miss Julia Trotterley, at the same time extending his hand in a right line from his heart to the looking-glass, and grimacing in a manner which he concluded must be irresistible.

"I think that's a killer!" exclaimed the self-satisfied Jesse.

"O! mercy on us!" cried the housekeeper, breaking in upon his physiognomical studies.

"Eh? what! is the house on fire?" demanded he.

"Worser nor that, sir," said the dame; "such a pickle—such a misfortune—who could ha' thought there was such a set o' wicked people in the world? Only to think—"

"What the devil is the matter?" demanded the impatient Weevil.

"The shirts, sir—frills, ruffles and all; not one to put on! every man John of em rolled in the mud. The poor mangling boy has been throwa down by some mischievous willin, and almost killed. His mother—honest woman—has just been here, and is ready to cry her eyes out, poor soul."

Weevil whistled so loud, and long, and shrilly, that the housekeeper was startled; and when he calmly declared "he must stay at home then," the old woman retired—wondering at his equanimity!

VII. THE CUR OF POISON.

Weevil, unfortunate as he was in his jokes, was no less so in his more serious attempts: his whole career was one grand

he discovered, too late to retract, that she was the dowdier daughter of an extravagant insolvent. To add to his disappointment, Mrs. Weevil proved an incorrigible shrew, whose eloquent tongue annoyed him unceasingly.

Proud, however, of his boasted tact and abilities, Weevil resolved to tame her; and after pondering for months upon the subject, resolved to put in form the following novel and extraordinary experiment.

Having purchased some white arsenic, upon the paper of which was duly printed "ARSENIC—POISON," he consigned the deleterious mineral to the flames, and replenished the envelope with white sugar. Watching his opportunity when Mrs. Weevil was in her tantrums, he calmly proceeded to the closet, and pouring out a cup of milk, mixed up the sweet potato.

"Jane," cried he, in a melancholy tone, stirring the potion with the fore-finger of the right hand—"Jane, listen to me for a few short moments—I shall not long be a burden to you."

His look and impressive manner silenced the storm. Quaffing the draught at one gulp, he cast the cup into the grate, and threw the paper upon the ground.

"What have you done?" shrieked Mrs. Weevil, snatching up the paper, and turning pale as Parian marble.

"Poison!" muttered Jesse, with the most thrilling tragedy-look he could assume; and clasping his hands to his face he buried his head in the cushions of the sofa.

A shriek, followed by an awful silence, ensued. Jesse ventured to peep between his fingers, expecting to see his rib extended on the hearth-rug in a swoon—but she had vanished.

"Where the dickens has she gone?" cried he rising.—"Jane!"—no answer.—He rested upon his elbow and listened.

A trampling of many feet upon the stairs, aroused him from his posture; and the next moment his better half rushed wildly into the room, followed by three men and the servant maid.

"My dear Mr. Weevil," said the foremost gentleman in black, in whom Jesse recognized a neighboring apothecary—"what could have compelled you to this rash act?"

Weevil was really alarmed by the crowd which he had so unexpectedly brought about his ears.

"What act?" demanded Weevil.

"You have swallowed poison!"

"Nonsense—nonsense—" said Weevil.

"Where is the cup, ma'am?"

"He has thrown it away," replied Mrs. Weevil, sobbing aloud; "but—but here is the horrible paper."

The apothecary looked at the paper, shook his head, shrugged his shoulders, and then looked significantly at his assistants, who immediately laid violent hands upon the disconcerted Weevil, and threw him at length upon the sofa.

"What in the devil are you about?" demanded Jesse, glaring wildly upon the

medical operator as he drew a pump from his coat-pocket.

"You must submit, Sir," said he, "resistance will avail you nothing."

"Pooh! pooh! nonsense—'pon my soul 'twas only a joke! a mere ruse—don't be a fool!" cried Jesse, struggling. "May I die if—"

The forcible introduction of the admirable machine put an end to further opposition. Weevil kicked and plunged in vain. The whole operation was admirably performed; and feeble, spiritless, and exhausted, the unfortunate patient was left extended on the couch. The apothecary promised to send a composing draught immediately, and left him in the meanwhile to the tender care of his wife, who alternately wept and scolded; winding up her hysterical harangue with a bitter remark upon his cruelty in wishing to leave her unprovided for!

EXPLORING TOUR BEYOND THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

A very interesting and valuable work has made its appearance, entitled "Journal of an Exploring Tour beyond the Rocky Mountains, under the direction of the Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, performed in the years 1835, '36 and '37; containing a description of the geography, geology, climate and productions; and the number, manners, and customs of the natives, with a map of the Oregon Territory. By Rev. Samuel Parker. 12mo. pp. 371." This map is by far the best that has yet been published, of the almost unknown regions of the far West. It commences upon the Western verge of civilization, say at Council Bluffs, about long. 96, and extends to the Pacific Ocean. North and South it extends from lat. 38 to 56. Although necessarily very imperfect, it conveys a pretty good idea of the general face of the country, its rivers, mountains, &c. and we are assured may be relied on, as far as it goes. The "Journal" is a description of occurrences, curiosities, and scenery, as they presented themselves to the notice of our traveller, with occasional observations having a more immediate bearing upon the objects of his tour, viz: to ascertain the most fit openings for missionary operations among the Indians. "The country here described," says the author, in his Preface, "is *sui generis*; every thing is formed on a large scale. Its lofty and perpetual snow-topped mountains, rising 20,000 feet or more, the trees of the forest, the wide extended prairies, plants of enormous growth, and the results of volcanic agency, which you meet in almost every direction, render the whole

an almost ever increasing scene of interest to the traveller; and if any statements appear large it is because the facts are so in themselves." Of the many wonderful things recorded in this book, and which the author assures us were penned with the most scrupulous regard to accuracy, we can copy but a few, referring the reader to the work itself for a connected view of these interesting travels. We are glad to find, by the extract first quoted, that a passage is observed through the Rocky mountains suitable for a Rail Road, as we shall wish to take a trip to the mouth of Columbia river, a few years hence, when we have 12 or 15 days to spare; or if we don't go ourselves, we may wish to send our children. There is hardly a doubt that such a work will eventually be constructed, and that our latest news from China and the Sandwich Islands, will come through this channel.—Under date of the 10th of August, 1835, Mr. Parker thus writes:—*N. Y. Journal Com.*

The passage through these mountains is in a valley, so gradual in the ascent and descent, that I should not have known we were passing them, had it not been that as we advanced the atmosphere gradually became cooler, and at length we found the perpetual snows upon our right hand and upon our left, elevated many thousand feet above us—in some places ten thousand. The highest part of these mountains are found by measurement to be eighteen thousand feet above the level of the sea. This valley was not discovered until some years since. Mr. Hunt and his party, more than twenty years ago, went near it, but did not find it, though in search of some favorable passage, it varies in width from five to twenty miles; and following its course, the distance through the mountains is about eighty miles, or a four days journey.—Though there are some elevations and depressions in this valley, yet, comparatively speaking, it is level. There would be no difficulty in the way of constructing a rail road from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean; and probably the time may not be very far distant when trips will be made across the continent, as they have been made to the Niagara falls, to see nature's wonders.

SULPHUR SPRING.

At a place called Jackson's Hole, a narrow defile near the head waters of Columbia river, is a remarkable Sulphur Spring. Mr. Parker thus briefly describes it.

Here, for some distance, I was much annoyed with the strong scent of sulphuretted Hydrogen, and soon saw at the foot of the mountain under the bed of gypsum a large sulphur spring, which sent up as much as thirty gallons of water per minute. Around this spring were large quantities of incrustated sulphur, and so strongly is the water saturated, that it colors the water of the river, on the side next to the spring, a greenish yellow for more than a mile below.

MAGNIFICENT SCENERY.

A few miles west of Jackson's Hole,